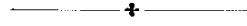


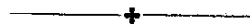
KING COUNTY
STATE OF WASHINGTON



FIFTH ANNUAL REPORT
of the
COUNTY ROAD ENGINEER
1939



STATE GOLDEN JUBILEE



Compiled under the direction of

H. H. SISLER
County Road Engineer

by

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Chief Clerk



CULTURAL AND GOVERNMENTAL PROGRESS OF KING COUNTY

(Including Seattle)

The early history of King County is closely interwoven with the development of the Puget Sound country as well as with the progress of Seattle. For years there were only isolated settlements here and there, Seattle being the largest unit. Up to its incorporation in 1869 it was under the jurisdiction of the county, and for the next ten years it was the only incorporated town therein. The old pioneers who advanced the cause of the city therefore benefitted the entire region as well, and their resourcefulness and vision are well-nigh incredible in the light of what has been accomplished. Not only did they display daring and initiative in providing themselves with the means of livelihood, but they were also mindful of the cultural aspects of their community.

The year 1853 found them already interested in the religious welfare of the settlement, as evidenced by the second paper recorded in King County, which was a conditional quit claim deed to a tract of land from D. S. Maynard to the Methodist Episcopal Church, dated July 25, 1853. This evidently did not materialize for later in the year C. D. Boren donated two lots for the same purpose, and when Rev. D. E. Blaine arrived he began work on what was the first church, dedicated in 1855. Prior to its erection, religious services had already been held, the first one by Bishop Demers, a Catholic, in 1852. Gradually churchmen of every faith arrived and houses of worship of nearly every denomination are now to be found in Seattle and King County.

School activities in the growing village were at first confined to those of a private character, the first such schoolhouse being called "Bachelor's Hall." About 1854 it seems that William A. Strickler, the first County Surveyor, provided these quarters then located at Columbia Street and First Avenue. By 1869 a school tax of eight mills was voted, land was purchased at Third Avenue and Madison Street from C. C. Terry, and the next year a two-story building was erected at a cost of \$3,000.00 for the building and the lots, which thus became Seattle's first public school.

The first school in King County itself was established even earlier than Seattle's, as the particulars available would indicate. About 1853 a school was begun at Van Asselt's claim in the Duwamish area, now incorporated within the boundaries of the city. Two years later another was located at Thomas called the John Thomas Schoolhouse, after which others followed, the next one being at Renton until by 1870 there were twelve school districts in the county. Very early in the scheme of county government a superintendent of common schools was provided for, but not always was it possible to pay this official a proper salary. An interesting letter in this connection was written to the county commissioners by E. Carr, then superintendent of schools, who on June 6th, 1870 complained of receiving in some years even less than five dollars in coin, and asking the board to consider his situation.

The first institution of higher education that might have been established in Seattle was the Puget Sound University, to which group C. D. Boren in 1854 donated the land between Columbia and Seneca Streets and Sixth and Terry Avenues, provided a building would be erected. Not being able to raise the necessary funds for the purpose the land reverted to Boren. Were that institution built, together with the Territorial University founded later, they would have presented a solid front from Union to Columbia Streets and might effectually have blocked Seattle's expansion to the east.

On January 29, 1855, the legislature established a territorial university at Seattle, with a township of land granted by Congress in 1854. It also established a branch on Boisfort Plains in Lewis County to be on an equal footing with that in Seattle.

King County to E. Carr 2nd.
 20 years Salary as Supt. Com.
 Schools, ending June 6th 1870

Coms. King Co.
 Gentlemen-

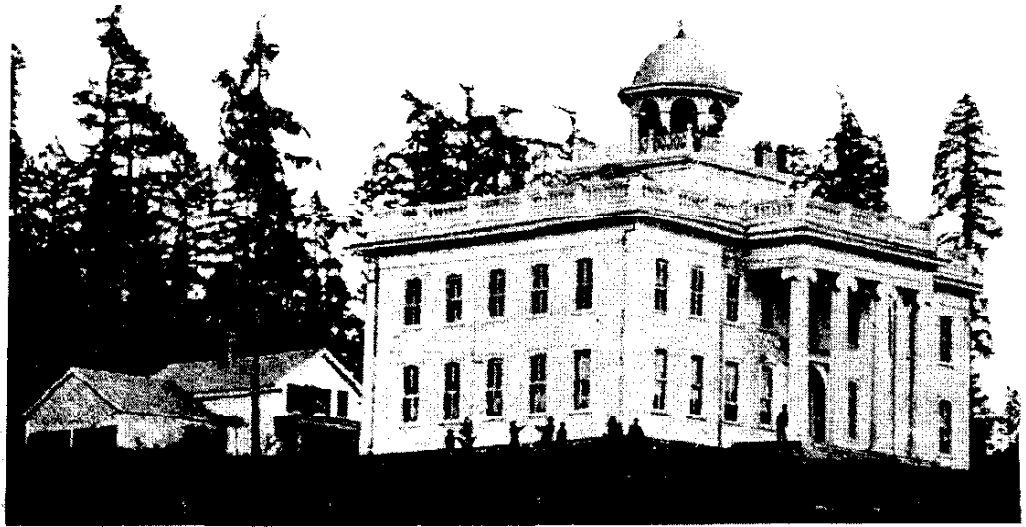
I have never
 asked for this office nor worked
 for an election to it-

I have served the seven
 years past, to the best of my
 ability, because the people
 chose me -

My salary some years has
 amounted to but five dollars in
 coin - The County numbers
 twelve school districts -

Now gentlemen please look
 at the example of other counties,
 consult the law, and allow
 me what will satisfy an honorable
 man's conscience -

Yours truly
 E. Carr



TERRITORIAL UNIVERSITY

Three years later that law was repealed and the university located on the Cowlitz Farm Prairie in Lewis County; but due to the efforts of A. A. Denny, legislative member from King County, in January 1861 the university was finally established here. Land bounded by Seneca and University Streets and Third and Sixth Avenues, a dense forest then on the outskirts of town, was donated by A. A. Denny, Edward Lander and C. C. Terry. Two months later the clearing of the site was begun, and a road opened up from Columbia Street to the University location to facilitate building operations. At that time Seattle was a village of twenty families with a total population of about 125 whites, and for such a small community the project certainly was an ambitious one. Though Olympia, Steilacoom and Vancouver were larger towns, from this time forward Seattle soon outstripped them, the increase being due to the permanent settlement of mechanics and their families who came to work on the project. School was opened November 4, 1861, and it speaks volumes for the spirit of the hardy pioneers who in eight months depending mostly on their own efforts, caused a forest to be cleared and a building to be erected. Considered too far out of town when established, by about 1890 the university was thought to be too far downtown, retarding the growth of the city in that direction. The Chamber of Commerce began to advocate its removal to one of several tracts then available, and on March 7th, 1891 the legislature passed an act providing for the establishment, location, maintenance and support of the University of Washington. The choice of sites narrowed down so that by 1894 removal was made to its present location.

By legislative enactment of January 10, 1860 the Seattle Library Association was incorporated, its roster consisting of nearly all the original pioneers. Mrs. H. L. Yesler was chosen librarian, and by 1873 the Seattle Library and Reading Rooms were located at First Avenue (Pioneer Square). Two years later Mrs. David S. Maynard opened a free reading room in her home on First Avenue South. In the beginning all assistance and services were voluntary, but in 1891 when the Seattle Public Library was officially organized a salaried superintendent was employed. Its location was in various rented quarters, the last being the Yesler residence, where the County City Building now stands, which was burned in 1901. As a result of this fire, Andrew Carnegie gave Seattle \$200,000.00 with which funds a new structure on Fourth Avenue was erected in 1906. The first branch library was Fremont, since when many have been opened in all sections of the city.

These cultural facilities as well as the industrial urge, played their part in bringing to Seattle an increasingly greater number of arrivals. They found that land could be had only from the original pioneers, who had staked out their claims

in pursuance to Congressional legislation in 1850 granting settlers between December 1, 1851 and December 1, 1853, 160 acres each to man and wife. Under this act the first donation claims were filed in 1852 by C. D. Boren, A. A. Denny, W. N. Bell, and D. T. Denny. After surveys were made the latter's claim was the first paper ever to be recorded in King County, in 1853, and the first title to be perfected, in 1860. As newcomers arrived, these donation claims were divided into lots, and among the most aggressive realtors of the day was Dr. Maynard. Even before the plat of his claim was filed, he pushed the sale of lots and by his efforts established settlers and their businesses upon his claim, which as long as he lived was the main portion of town. Dr. Maynard did not record these sales until much later; hence the first recorded deed was from C. D. Boren to William A. Strickler on July 12, 1853, representing a sale of property for \$1,000.00.

Although the town was growing, until 1853 all mail was directed to Olympia, from which point it was transported to Seattle by canoe at the rate of 25 cents per letter. The increase in activities caused the establishment of a postoffice in Seattle, with A. A. Denny as first postmaster, the first direct mail being recieved on August 27, 1853. The second postoffice was established at Alki in 1854 with C. C. Terry as postmaster until he moved to Seattle in 1855.

King County's orderly progress was at this time interrupted by the outbreak of the Indian Wars. Though most of the tribes were friendly when the American pioneers arrived, having had contact with the white man through the Hudson's Bay Company and the earlier explorers, the attitude of the Indians soon became hostile. In 1853, on the shores of Lake Union, the first murder of a white settler took place. The Indian murderer was tried, found guilty, and executed. From then on murders increased until the troubles in the Puget Sound area culminated in the White River massacre, October 21, 1855, and the gathering of many tribes for an attack on Seattle. The Americans took refuge in the blockhouses at Cherry Street and First Avenue and at Main Street and Occidental Avenue from which women and children were transferred to the sloop-of-war Decatur. The Indians took cover in the woods along what is now Fourth, Fifth, and Sixth Avenues, but the newly organized militia with the help of the "Decatur" and the United States troops repulsed the attack. During these troubles, Lieutenant Slaughter of the United States Army was killed by the Indians, presumably led by Kitsap. At the site of this struggle there subsequently grew up a town named Slaughter in his honor, and one of the counties created out of King was similarly named. Later they were called Auburn and Kitsap respectively, so that no place remains to honor the memory of this brave soldier.

The Indian War slowed down activities to such an extent that by 1857 only 100 people remained in Seattle, with four stores, two industries, and one hotel to serve them. After this conflict so much had been lost that the settlers had practically to begin all over again. What helped was the Fraser River gold excitement in 1858 which established Seattle as an outfitting and starting point, and was responsible for the subsequent growth of the town. During the next ten year period the mining boom continued, due to discoveries at Boise, Idaho in 1864 and next year in the Coeur d'Alene Mountains. By 1860 when the Bagleys arrived in a buggy drawn by two horses, after a fifteen day trip from Salem (being the first to utilize a wheeled vehicle for the journey), the unbroken forest began at Columbia Street, and Seattle's population had increased to 182. Aside from Yesler's sawmill and Woodin's tannery, there were three general merchandising stores, a tinsmith, a blacksmith, two hotels, a restaurant, a photographer, a hospital, a druggist, a tailor and a livery stable. This was fair progress for the lean three-year period after the Indian troubles and it demonstrates the indomitable spirit of the early Seattleites. One of them, Harvey Pike took up a claim which included the portage between Lakes Washington and Union. Realizing the benefits that would ensue from connecting the two lakes, he proceeded to dig a canal using a pick, shovel and wheelbarrow. Naturally his efforts were doomed to failure, but it goes to show the pioneer will to conquer obstacles. It was this same revival of faith in the town's destiny, aided by the gold rush and the increased industrial demands that caused an influx of new

blood. Differing from the first settlers who were farmers and their families, the later arrivals consisted of unmarried miners, loggers, millmen, sailors, etc. This created such a scarcity of marriageable white women that Asa Mercer undertook to go East and induce respectable women to come back with him. He succeeded and the marriages that resulted helped to raise Seattle's moral and social standards. By 1883 Seattle and King County were definitely in the lead throughout the state, not only in respect to population, but as to wealth, taxable property, industries, etc., passing ahead of Thurston and Walla Walla Counties.

The growth of Seattle gave rise to an increase in the official business of King County. As early as 1853 the pioneers must have visualized such great progress, for on April 4th of that year the Board of County Commissioners ordered its clerk to obtain title from Dr. D. S. Maynard to Block 17 of the Town of Seattle for the use of King County. Though the transaction was never completed it indicates clearly how the early authorities looked ahead. However, by 1860 plans for an edifice to accommodate county offices materialized in the construction of the first building to be erected for county purposes. It was located at Mill and Third Streets, now recognizable as the triangular plot bounded by Jefferson Street, Third Avenue and Yesler Way. It was called the County Building and here county business was conducted. Leased from H. L. Yesler, then chairman of the county board who owned the land and who had supervised the construction, he took it over for rent due, and it was for a time occupied as a schoolhouse. The county then for several years rented quarters here and there for the transaction of their business. On November 13th, 1873, an act was passed providing for the building of a court house and jail in King County, but it was not until 1882 that the first actual County Court House was built. This was a two-story frame building erected at Third Avenue and Jefferson Street (now Dilling Park) at a cost of \$3,250.00, and sold to the City of Seattle in 1891 on completion of the next County Court House. Bonds for its construction were issued to the extent of \$202,125.00 and a stone building was erected in the block bounded by Seventh and Eighth Avenues, Terrace and Alder Streets, known as "Profanity Hill." Though out of the way, the site was selected because the property was county owned. In 1916, this stone structure was abandoned for the present Court House, bonds for which were issued in the amount of approximately \$806,973.00. Ten years later an addition was built for \$1,565,000.00.

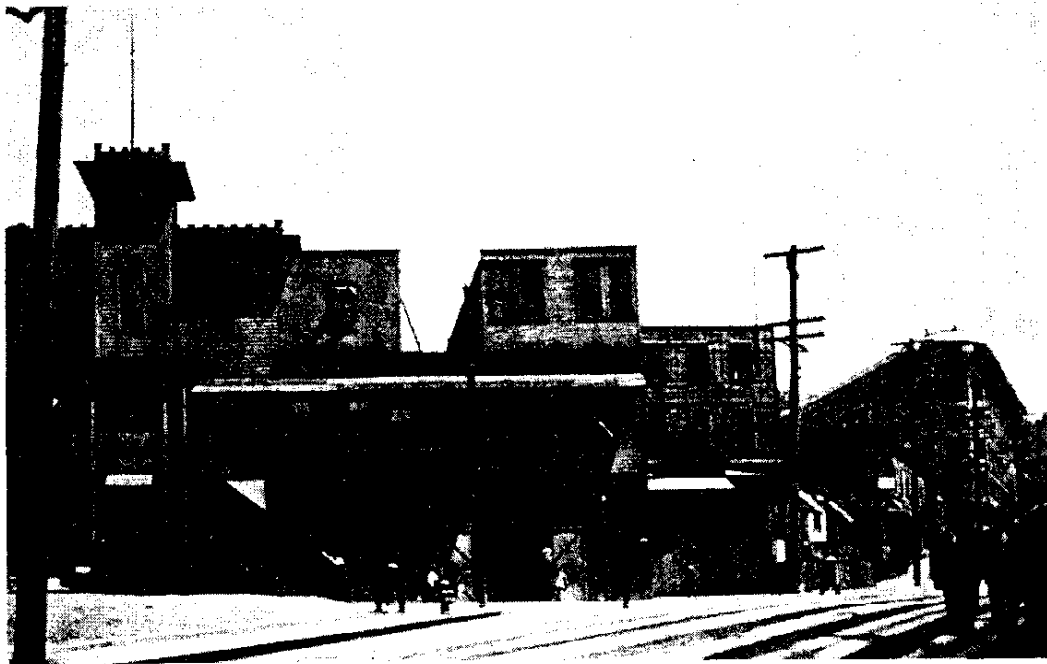
Bond issues were not unknown to King County, one of the earliest being in connection with the Snoqualmie Pass Road. However, county "scrip" or what are today known as warrants, were the first form of financing utilized by the authorities. Many old vouchers were discovered in the files showing both the scrip and the gold dollar value of the invoices, the scrip being at a great discount. The county's financial condition seemed always to be stringent, and on one occasion to ease the strain, when H. L. Yesler was appointed supervisor of the Seattle road district in 1858, all road supervisors and the county treasurer were ordered to accept county scrip at par. In 1877 King County had a \$16,000.00 debt on which it was paying 18 per cent annual interest, with its scrip at a discount (nothing very unusual) and were it not for the growing population and a resultant increase in the assessment roll, the county would have been bankrupt. Today's financial condition is, on the whole, very sound the only major difficulty being the relief situation.

In 1893, the King County Hospital was built on a quarter-section in the Duwamish Valley which had reverted to King County when the former owner, John Thompson, died in 1865 leaving no heirs. It is now known as the County Farm, Harborview Hospital having since been completed for the county's use.

Under authority of the Port District Act, Laws of 1911, the King County Port Commission was created by vote of the people, as a separate municipal corporation superimposed on Seattle and King County, but independent of both. Under its direction, the East Waterway was improved and works built at Salmon Bay, Smith's Cove, and the Lake Washington Ferry. Terminals were also constructed at Piers 40 and 41, at East Marginal Way and Spokane Street, at Hanford, Stacy and Bell Streets, and at Salmon Bay.

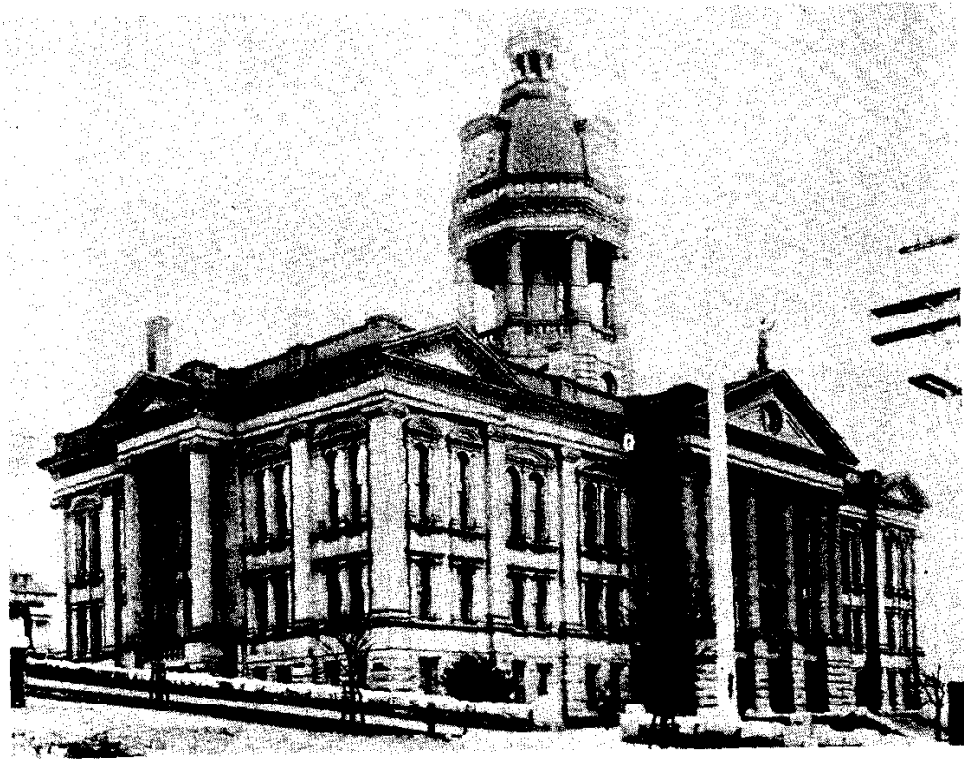


FIRST KING COUNTY COURT HOUSE



OLD AND NEW CITY HALL, SEATTLE

The old City Hall in Foreground is the First King County Court House with many Additions



KING COUNTY COURT HOUSE ON "PROFANITY HILL"



PRESENT KING COUNTY COURT HOUSE